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PLANNING BOARD

PLANNING BOARD REPORT FOR FALL ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OCTOBER 16, 2017 WARRANT ARTICLES

The following information pertains to the Planning Board's report on Article 34. For any questions or information, contact the Planning Department at (508) 839-5335 ext. 1120.

Planning Board Report for Article 34: ZBL-2017-5 and ZBL-2017-6 Establishment of North Grafton Transit Village Overlay District

At its meeting on September 25, 2017 the Grafton Planning Board conducted a public hearing to consider proposed Grafton Zoning By-law to establish the North Grafton Transit Village Overlay District (NGTVOD) as new Section 13 in conformance with the requirements of MGL Chapter 40R. The establishment of the NGTVOD comprises of two articles, ZBL-2017-5 establishes the district bylaw and ZBL-2017-6 adds the NGTVOD to the list of zoning districts for the Town of Grafton. Board members present were Chairman Michael Scully, Vice Chairman Robert Hassinger, Clerk Daniel Graham, and Members David Robbins, and Linda Hassinger. No public comment on the article was received.

At the public hearing, Town Planner Joseph Laydon reviewed the proposed bylaw. Chapter 40R was enacted in 2004 to encourage communities to create dense residential or mixed use "smart growth" zoning districts which include affordable housing units, that would provide intermodal connections, and be located in existing city or town centers or other "highly suitable" locations. The establishment of smart growth overlay districts requires that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) approve any local zoning regulations and design standards to ensure consistency with the goals of Chapter 40R. Communities that adopt "Smart Growth" zoning are also eligible for payments from a Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund, as well as other financial incentives

The NGTVOD Bylaw identifies a Sub-Area A that contains approximately 8.8 acres of the Grafton State Hospital adjacent to Pine Street and currently owned by the Department of Capital Asset Maintenance and Management. The bylaw, which is based off the existing Fisherville Smart Growth Overlay District bylaw, establishes a minimum density of 20 units per acre in conformance with MGL Chapter 40R.

The redevelopment of a portion of the Grafton State Hospital is a recommendation of the recently completed North Grafton Transit Village Strategic Master Plan. The plan calls for the establishment of a transit village in the vicinity of the Grafton Commuter Rail Station. Attached to this report is an excerpt from the Plan summarizing the elements of the plan for the portion of the Grafton State Hospital included in the NGTVOD.

The Planning Board received public comment urging the protection and preservation of the existing structures of the former state hospital. Mr. Laydon stated that the structures are on the National Register of Historic Places and the Plan recommend the preservation and re-use of the existing structures. He added that the development of design guidelines at a future date by the Planning Board will provide guidance for examining preservation over demolition.

The Planning Board discussed the density established within the district and noted it was similar to the Fisherville Smart Growth District. The Board discussed setbacks from property lines and other buildings and the need for flexibility for parceling off land for development. The Board asked the Town Planner to refine language on dimensional requirements for the Board to consider. The Board voted to continue the hearing to October 2, 2017.

On October 2nd Mr. Laydon presented recommendations to address Board member concerns for setbacks and dimensional requirements. He also noted that the article must be amended to include the addition of the NGTVOD to the list of districts in Section 3.1.5 of the Zoning Bylaw.

Based on the Board's deliberations on the merits of the proposed amendment, the Planning Board voted unanimously **TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE** of Article 34 with the following amendments that are indicated by the following: deletions by ~~striketrough~~ and insertions by underline.

Section 3.1.5 District Intents and Purposes

Section 3.1.5.15 North Grafton Transit Village Overlay District.

13.10 Dimensional and Density Requirements

13.10.A Dimensional Requirements. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Zoning By-law, the dimensional requirements applicable in the NGTVOD are as follows. All dimensional requirements shall be computed based upon the Project rather than building by building basis:

Minimum Lot Area:Not applicable
Minimum Lot Frontage:100 feet
Maximum Building Height:5 stories excluding parking facilities but not
higher than 75 feet

Minimum Street ~~and Lot Line~~ Setback:.....50 feet
Minimum Lot Line Setback for existing structures:0 feet
Minimum Lot Line Setback for proposed structures:15 feet

~~Maximum~~ Minimum Open Space:10%
Total Project Coverage by Buildings:50%
Minimum Setback between Buildings15 feet

ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN DETAIL: PINE STREET CORRIDOR

Part of the former State Hospital Campus adjacent to Job Corps will be sold and redeveloped for Housing and other uses. The large former hospital building on the site could be redeveloped for housing around a central courtyard. New parking lots would have to be built along the road in front of the buildings to accommodate residents.

the core of the new village is centered on the intersection of Pine Street and Centennial Drive. Two and three-story mixed-use buildings line a broad sidewalk with a continuous canopy of street trees, creating a traditional Main Street character.

Parallel on-street parking slows traffic and provides for convenient short-term parking. Larger shared parking lots in the rear of buildings serve long-term workers and residents.

Internal roads with parallel parking and tree-shaded sidewalks continue the village theme. A small park acts as a focal point, with outdoor cafe seating in front of adjacent buildings.

Existing stormwater retention areas are upgraded and connected to a series of rain gardens and landscaped infiltration swales to manage runoff from new roofs and paved areas.

Continuous sidewalks on both sides of every street provide for comfortable pedestrian circulation.

Built on the corner with parking (and/or gas pumps) behind, a coffee shop or convenience store acts as a landmark at the entrance to the village.

